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POETRY & SURVIVAL

MICHAEL TRUE

Two poems of survival

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Fiftieth Anniversary Year
1973-1974

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THE HUMANIST MANIFESTO

HOWARD B. RADEST
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NEWS & VIEWS

Homemade A-Bombs

A lot of shudders have been generated by *The New Yorker* profile on physicist Theodore B. Taylor, designer of the smallest and largest fission bombs (Davy Crockett and the Super Oralloy, respectively) — and specifically by Dr. Taylor's comments on how easy it would be for a small group of persons to put together a fission bomb on their own and use it for some sinister purpose, like, I suppose, knocking off a bank or blackmailing a city.

The job is made easy by the U.S. Government, Dr. Taylor notes. A reading room maintained by the Atomic Energy Commission in Washington contains the mathematical fundamentals of fission bombs (data declassified since 1964) and also houses information about specific storage locations and shipping patterns of bomb ingredients, in the event that the bomb-makers need to rip off an element or two to produce a workable bomb.

If it's detailed technical information that the researcher wants, then there's a Xerox machine handy to eliminate the necessity of tedious note-making. The researcher can copy to his (or her) heart's content—thanks largely to the Atomic Energy Act of 1954, as amended, which says that the public has the right to know about the private use of nuclear materials.

Thereupon, Taylor (through profiler John McPhee) takes *New Yorker* readers step by step through the process by which it would be relatively easy to steal nuclear materials and put together a bomb with the aid of readily available printed matter. It's not just possible "but more and more apparent," Taylor remarks, "that nuclear explosions will again take place in cities."

That's exactly what the late Thomas M. Conrad wrote in *Commonweal* back on July 25, 1969, in an article entitled DO-IT-YOURSELF A-BOMBS.

Conrad's premise did not differ markedly from Taylor's. He, too, noted that a private A-bomb developer could get his bang through public literature of the Atomic Energy Commission. There is, of course, no exact blueprint for the developer to follow, but, observed Conrad, there is a large body of direct or inferential information on designs, fission fractions, materials, yields, systems, performances—as well as on critical mass determinations, computer codes, hydrodynamics, nuclear reaction cross-sections, etc. For persons with the proper expertise, the formula is suddenly no less uncrackable than the Sunday crossword puzzle of the *New York Times* is with a dictionary.

Conrad envisioned the possibility of bombs of 200 pounds and a yield of 100 kilotons being packaged in a container 1.5 feet in diameter and about 3 feet in length—"pretty handy," he remarked, "for a car trunk, under a car seat, in a railroad locker, and hundreds of other places." A single strong man, "with a proper truss hidden under clothing," could carry the nuclear bomb about without too much trouble, Conrad calculated.

Some people thought at the time—1969, remember—that we were kooky for running Conrad's piece. The idea was too exotic to be real, we were told.

Well, if Tom Conrad's idea was "exotic" in 1969, it is hardly so today—not with the energy crisis and the immanent proliferation of nuclear-power plants. The expansion of the industry means that "for every kilogram of weapons-grade nuclear material that exists now hundreds will exist in the not distant future," according to Taylor.

Adding that eventuality to the ready availability of fission-bomb literature makes the problem of private manufacturing of nuclear bombs "immediate," declares Dr. Taylor. Something should be done about it now.

That's what Tom Conrad said in 1969. Hopefully, Dr. Taylor will receive a better hearing.

That Tape in Britain

The *Manchester Guardian*, under the headline ROSE MARY PUTS HER FOOT IN IT, poked fun at the White House explanation for the 18 minutes, 15 seconds gap in the Haldeman-Nixon tape for June 20, 1972.

The gap portion, said *The Guardian*, had as much grab as "a soliliquy in a Japanese Noh drama"; the extant portion, the sound of "vacuum cleaning at a cocktail party." *The Guardian* continues:

"It was a huge insulting practical joke. People giggled nervously. One reporter said to another: 'Is this the bit she erased?' He replied: 'No, this is the good part.' The first reporter said: 'Good God!'

"We were listening to one of the tapes the President had made for history. Testimony has been given that the system was of the highest quality, periodically checked. The tape we were hearing was virtually worthless for any purpose.

"You could just recognize the President's voice. Occasionally phrases come through: 'Go ahead'; 'Oh, sure'; 'Okay'; 'Appreciate it.' The clearest moment, just about the only intact sentence audible in the courtroom was: 'I'd like a little of that consomme.' But we already knew that the President was going to say something of the kind to the White House steward. We also heard the President whistling.

"At least history will know that three days after the Watergate burglary, the President whistled and drank consomme."

Nixon Nostalgia

Boston Globe feature writer James G. Crowley reminisced recently of the night he and his wife played dinner hosts (by default) 25 years ago to a young California Congressman and his wife, Dick and Pat Nixon.

"Harriet and I met the Nixons a short while earlier at another party, and were struck by the fact that it was virtually impossible to coax either of them out of their shells. Mrs. Nixon faded away into one wall and Mr. Nixon into another, resisting all of the camaraderie which also is a customary part of the Washington scene.

"This is how it was at dinner. In vain, I tried every gambit known to a garrulous man. At last, determined to spark some kind of reaction from ths almost silent man, I cleared my throat and said, 'Mr. Nixon, please fill me in on those Pumpkin Papers. Why on earth were they hidden, of all places, in a hollowed-out pumpkin in Whittaker Chambers' pumpkin patch?'

"With that, he came to life. He looked at me as though I must have been out of my mind.

" 'But you're a newspaperman,' he said. 'You must have seen the headlines we got out of it!'

"This, I swear, is the gospel truth. It struck me as pretty cruddy."

Odds and Ends

Media Industry Newsletter reports that the *National Catholic Reporter* has fallen from a "fleshy" 100,000 circulation in March, 1969, to 42,000 today. "But," comments *MIN*, "the *National Catholic Reporter* does not have a Stoical outlook on the future. It is pursuing advertising pages with the diligence of a well-worked syllogism while it sharpens its Ockhamite razors on quavering theological gulps." . . . That ought to reassure staffers. JOHN DEEDY

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CORRESPONDENCE

Caveat Emptor

Brooklyn, N.Y.

To the Editors: I am puzzled by Elliott Wright's comments regarding the price of *A Spectacle Unto the World* [Viking, $10,] which he refers to in his October 19th review of that book. In the introduction to the volume, Robert Coles states clearly that proceeds from the sale of the book will go to the Catholic Worker. It also seems to me that since one-third of the book is a photographic essay by Jon Erikson, the price for this is quite reasonable. Evidently both men felt that for the thousands who have never seen the Catholic Worker photographs such as these would be helpful.

I, for one, am grateful that such a book has been issued. It is hardly a "coffee table" book as Wright suggests. In an age where technocracy and IBM cards seem to have reduced poverty to a pile of statistics, it is important to recall the human dimensions. And in an age where integrity and concern on the part of our "official leaders" are sorely lacking, it is good to be reminded that one person can make a difference, that the enigma of the Catholic Worker cannot be explained by pointing to Dorothy Day or Peter Maurin, but rather to the power of the grace of God in many hearts which are open. We need *A Spectacle Unto the World.*

DONEZ XIQUES, C.N.D.
Assistant Professor of English
Brooklyn College of C.U.N.Y.

Reply

Amen to Sister Donez's reminder that the Catholic Worker Movement points to the grace of God. While aware of Dr. Coles' reference to assignment of income from the book to *The Catholic Worker*, the newspaper, I was and remain bothered by a $10 volume on Dorothy Day and her colleagues. I suggested that the sum would

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THE ENERGY CHALLENGE

It is now widely appreciated that the energy crisis is more than a mere byproduct of diplomatic tensions in the Middle East, but instead a crisis involving the supply of natural resources and one that countries geared to high energy consumption, such as the U.S., would be forced to face up to in a decade or two-decades' time. As has been noted with respect to oil, even the allegedly bottomless wells of the Arab world are finite, and would sustain current growth rates only until some time between 1985 and 1990. New energy sources would have to be found in the immediate future, and the U.S. can be grateful for the present crisis for at least prodding it to search out new energy possibilities. In this context, the Senate has voted a $20-billion bill calling for a massive 10-year research and development program into such fields as solar power, geothermal energy and ways of making more available for power the country's vast coal resources, said to be plentiful enough to carry the nation to the year 2800. President Nixon, for his part, has established a national goal of self-sufficiency in energy for 1980.

Crash programs are fine on paper, but the manner in which the energy question is being "crashed" leaves room for serious doubts. The President, for instance, speaks of drafting 250 oil-company officials into a kind of energy super-board, and recently he settled on a former Wall Street investment banker, William E. Simon, as his energy czar. Neither move by the President provides much assurance that the crash program he has in mind will not be business/profit oriented. The Senate's bill, on the other hand, has much to commend it, including a certain caution about prematurely committing the country to an over-reliance on nuclear power plants—a caution Mr. Nixon does not share, but which is extremely well-advised given the problems connected with nuclear power, from generation through disposal of nuclear wastes (so hot that they boil themselves in their cement and steel caskets, and will do so for decades). But the Senate bill is one-dimensional nonetheless.

Where the planners are noticeably falling short is in approaching the energy crisis strictly as technological challenge, with seemingly no implica-

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tions beyond getting depleted storage facilities full again. One hears virtually nothing about the purposes to which replenished energy is to be put, or of the possibilities of any social ramifications due to limited supplies. Is there, for instance, to be a continuation of the *laissez-faire* policies of the past, whereby energy was produced to satisfy not just needs, but the whims and wastes of individual manufacturers and consumers? In other words, is the novelty manufacturer to be permitted to push electric toothbrushes onto market shelves when elbow power is adequate for the job they do? Are architects to be allowed to go on designing hermetically sealed buildings with 24-hour-a-day controlled temperatures, when windows can be opened or closed for desired comfort? Is the gasoline industry to be forever at the mercy of Detroit's proclivity for over-sized and over-powered automobiles?

Energy shortages are already providing the answer "no" to some of these questions, but the risks are still too great for the future to be trusted entirely to traditional forces of supply and demand. Barring a spectacular breakthrough in the harnessing of some new energy source, there cannot be in the future as there was in the past a complete open-endedness with respect to usages of energy. The infiniteness of manfacturer and consumer demands is going to have to be brought into line with the finiteness of resources.

It is precisely at this point that the social issue comes into focus, for any management of energy supplies immediately involves some large legal and human rights, ranging from the right of the manufacturer to make what he wants as he wants, to the right of the individual to live as and perhaps where he wants. This may not be possible any longer in a society where there is limited energy and where what energy there is must be matched to the needs of the community and nation as a whole.

What would seem to be needed, therefore, are not only crash programs of research and development, but some careful study of life in a society where some rights might have to be adjusted to energy limitations. The idea is not a pleasant one in a country like the U.S., and with good fortune the eventuality will never come to pass. But if the crisis of the past few months has taught anything, it should be the wisdom of being prepared.

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THE LABOR SCENE

BIG TABLE BLUES

Six years ago, during the long and bitter winter of the strike in the nonferrous metals industry, a spokesman for one of the "copper barons" said that his company—whose net profits in the previous year had increased by $137 million—would consider adding a few cents to the wage offer if only the union could get the miners to eat their lunches underground.

"And what would you be giving us," replied Joe Molony of the Steelworkers, then chairman of the copper workers bargaining committee, "if I can get 'em to *live* underground?"

The exchange—perhaps sans the Molony wit—could well have occurred around other negotiating tables in recent weeks, testifying to the continuing presence of a smoldering industrial and occupational strife in a country with an already full inventory of social and political discontent. Watergate, the tapes, the firestorm around the Nixon Presidency and the energy showdown have all tended to overshadow the restless mood of blue-collar workers up against a wall of third-year wage freezes.

Ford Motor Company skilled tradesmen, for the first time in their bargaining history, reject a national contract. A Chrysler pact is preceded by a strike and followed by further unhappiness. Some 33,000 UAW members in Caterpillar Tractor strike. TWA experiences a shutdown and strike, the publishing industry reacts to a strike among Canadian paperworkers, New York hospital workers strike in protest against Cost of Living Council inaction, newspaper workers and uniformed civil service employees are involved in work stoppages.

In mass-production industry, the pattern in recent collective bargaining history has been to have the issues thrashed out at "the big table," where top negotiators from the corporate giants in auto, steel, rubber and other sectors would nail down the prevailing wage increases, agree to the industry-wide issues which surface in preliminary plant-level soundoffs and after appropriate meetings seek to deliver a "laundry list" of non-economic gains ranging from workplace conditions to pensions.

Contracts which cover hundreds of thousands of workers, and which become the basis of other agreements in allied industries, have become increasingly difficult to negotiate without the open, and often militant opposition of some work sectors. The recent Ford skilled tradesmen's rejection of their national contract, by more than four to one, reflected the division which is present among all the large auto manufacturers.

"I'm not a psychiatrist. I'm just a collective bargainer," UAW President Leonard Woodcock replied in answer to a question on the feelings of his skilled-trades members a week before the union reached an agreement with General Motors. His apparent frustration may have been a reflection of UAW leadership over the one-sided

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vote to turn down the Ford pact by the 28,000 tradesmen who would have been covered.

It could also be the continuing hairshirt that the "trades" have been to the UAW, who have been a reminder of separatist tendencies in a union which has always sold industrial solidarity. The late Walter Reuther yielded to the skilled workers by permitting them a special vote on items that affect them exclusively. And this was the means by which the tradesmen rejected the Ford pact and influenced a G.M. agreement which includes a clause allowing skilled tradesmen not to work overtime.

Under the Ford contract—which Woodcock said was to be "renegotiated," to satisfy the objections of the tradesmen—if a skilled trades worker chose not to work overtime on weekends, the company could replace him by upgrading non-skilled production workers, hiring part-time help or bringing in outside contractors. The G.M. clause, said Woodcock, would "protect and satisfy" the tradesmen. The intensity of feeling within the union over this issue was expressed last month when a leader in Detroit's Ford Local 600 shot and wounded a skilled trades worker following an argument over the rejection vote.

The feeling among unskilled and semi-skilled production workers is strong against the skilled-trades minority who they believe have received better treatment by virtue of having the separate-vote option. UAW leaders see them as a potential secessionist presence who could break the unity of company-wide bargaining if they did withdraw. To the companies, the trades will always represent an Achilles heel of UAW solidarity.

Big-table negotiators in auto have also been successively puzzled and angered by other aspects of their recent contract referendums, which have not followed other patterns. Workers at the Ford casting plant in Michigan, for instance, voted against the pact even though they won the right to retire after 25 years of service. Yet tradesmen at the same plant—not covered by this clause—voted for it.

All of this, of course, contributes toward the unease of those who monitor the nation's economy. Internal disputes within large unions have generally healed when bargaining time rolls around. Yet what will Arnold Miller spell out at the first convention of his newly-democratized United Mine Workers, short of the Tony Boyle image of real or imagined collusion with the mine owners? Coal is one of the major contracts up in 1974.

The coming year also will bring contract deadlines covering almost four million workers in aerospace, aluminum, non-ferrous metals, cans, glass and the nation's bankrupt railways. The shadows of continuing inflation, the uncertainties over the economic controls program and the impact of the energy shortage will be big-table participants in all these bargaining sectors, guaranteed to complicate and frustrate both sides.

The irony of the discontent in the ranks in auto may be the apparent cobelligerent status of ideological opposites within the UAW. On one side are the generally well-paid (some earn as much as $20,000 yearly) skilled tradesmen—electricians, mechanics, millwrights, tool-and-die-makers, repairmen and maintenance workers, who over the years have tended to become separatist not only in internal union involvement but also in politics and life styles. At the other end are the self-proclaimed activists, the ideological militants, black caucus members and aggressive young workers (as in the Lordstown, Ohio GM facility) who have picketed Solidarity House, called the recent pacts "sellouts" and have called wildcats against union leadership as well as the company. Yet they are generally the unskilled and semi-skilled production-line workers.

During the Ford vote, while the national vote was in favor of the agreement among the non-skilled workers, significant plants like Detroit's giant Rouge assembly line facility voted against it, suggesting more "militant" caucus opposition than tradesmen trouble. At Rouge an observer could get allegations against both company and union from opposites of the spectrum. Yet the one issue which was common to skilled and unskilled workers, overtime, was won in the pact which allowed them to refuse extra hours.

The luxury of predicting ultimate labor peace within the framework of the freeze has passed, economists and negotiators seem to feel. It is a time for the outpouring of men who feel that they are without any control over the course of their lives. Said a sign held by a picketing UAW member in front of his union's Solidarity House last month: " 'Dissident'—'Radical'—'Militant'—But Not Stupid."

RUSSELL W. GIBBONS

(Russell W. Gibbons, a frequent contributor, is a labor editor in Pittsburgh.)

NEXT WEEK

AVERY DULLES, S.J. writes in the Christmas issue about the meaning of the Incarnation:

"The Incarnation, as a paradoxical meeting-ground of the divine and the human, illumines the mystery of the Church and the mystery of man. According to Vatican II, the mystery of the Church may be compared 'by a most excellent analogy' to that of the incarnate Word. The Church is an abiding union between the Spirit of Jesus and the community of those who believe in Jesus. As in Christology, so in ecclesiology, there are two fundamental heresies. The first heresy would be to divinize the Church, overlooking its human component; the second would be to think of the Church as merely human, neglecting the unfailing presence of the Holy Spirit."

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THE NEW ANTI-SEMITISM

MICHAEL NOVAK

In a brilliant reply to Daniel Berrigan, Rabbi Arthur Hertzberg dissects the new anti-Semitism. All of us are going to have to be more vigilant. Writing in *American Report* (Nov. 12), Rabbi Hertzberg shows exactly how the "new left," including the Catholic left, has veered around to join an ancient right. The rhetoric is different; the symbols are new; but the basic moves are classical.

First there comes the pretense of a new, pure, and non-historical orthodoxy. One identifies not with Rome or with Geneva, not with any flesh-and-blood people, not with any actual, corrupt, weighted-down and sinful historical system of governance. No, one is "in resistance" against all that, an angel in brutal world, a new gnostic, uncontaminated by the incarnation of one's people in all-too-sinful structures. And so one insists that Jews should be gnostics, too. Jews should not accept the historical evils and ambiguities of an earthly land, of roots, of a state, of a political and human community. But what is it, then, to be a Jew? Or a Christian? Were we called to escape from history? Or to enter into society, incarnated even in its injustices and evils, to make of them such small, modest lights in the darkness as we can. The human being is a political animal. The Jew is a human being.

A curial priest *circa* 1958 reported to Rome that the church was thriving in Latin America. "How can that be?" he was asked. "You have said that the churches are empty, there are no vocations, the gap between politics and religion is virtually complete." "Ah!" he replied, "but the doctrine is so pure!" In its contemporary version, the report from Latin America is equally ecstatic: "Ah, the resistance is so pure!"

The second move Daniel Berrigan made in his original article in *American Report* (October 29), is to divide "the leaders of the Jewish people" from "the great majority of the Jewish people." Rabbi Hertzberg rightly shudders at this classic Christian, anti-Jewish device—it is the "scribes," the "pharisees," the "high priests," who murdered the Messiah.

The third move is to use "Zionists" as a word of opprobrium. "The fate of the Vietnamese was as unimportant to the Zionists in our midst as was the state of the Palestinians," Berrigan writes. But Rabbi Abraham Heschel was the greatest Zionist in our midst, and, surely, the groundswell of American Jewish identification with Zion is overwhelming. Zion is home, Zion is roots, Zion is heritage, Zion is identity. To be a Zionist is now virtually identical with being Jewish—and the difference between the two is not for a Christian to adjudicate. There is a tone of voice, "the Zionists in our midst," which is as ominous as any tone the human voice can utter.

The fourth move is to identify the Jewish people with unpopular causes. Berrigan announces that the "leadership" of the American Jewish community, "I stress leadership . . . was fervent in support of Nixon . . . To put the matter brutally, many American Jewish leaders were capable of ignoring the Asian holocaust in favor of economic and military aid to Israel." This is a lie. American Protestants voted 68 percent for Nixon, Jews 66 percent for McGovern. Jewish "leadership" was far more on the side of McGovern, far more resistant to Nixon, than Protestant or Catholic leadership; and far more outraged, publicly and privately, by Vietnam. Berrigan, indeed, puts the matter "brutally."

The fifth move is to pretend to some neutral, universal, moral, and prophetic position, outside all finite human identities. It is a pretense of living in some realm of "conscience," the "conviction that around the world, there exists a spiritual network of those who have put their lives to the same resistance. A network of conscience." There is no such universal network. There is no such univocal evil, against which all conscientious persons are in "the same resistance." There are good men languishing in Czech and Slovak labor camps who do not believe that in resisting Russian hegemony they are in the "same" struggle as Daniel Berrigan. They have no illusions about paradise in the United States. Were there *no* United States, or a powerless United States, their situation would be even more parlous than it is.

The same is true of the Arab states. It is all well and good to buy arms from Russia. But in what cat's belly would the Arab mouse be swallowed if Russia felt no check to her ambitions? There is scarce and indispensable "black gold" in the Arab states. Who controls the Arab states has Japan and Europe by the throat. Arab independence, hence Arab policy, depends upon keeping both Russia and the United States in mutual check. The Arabs have been intelligent and Israel is their sacrificial pawn, the key to their unity and independence. Both Arabs and Israelis have right on their side; but the issue for the Israelis, as it is not for the Arabs, is survival.

The sixth move is to ignore one's own finite identity. Daniel Berrigan has the bad taste and foolish judgment, in such a context, to hold himself up as an archetypal Jew, and to urge that Jews become like *him* in order to fulfill their own identity. Here, then, is the fruit of pretended universalism, loss of rootedness, lack of concrete sensibility. The

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POETRY & SURVIVAL

MICHAEL TRUE

Providing a dimension of sanity in a mad, mad world

"I would say it is not our business to defend poetry but the business of poetry to defend us."

ROBERT FRANCIS

I

In poetry more than in any other literary form, the writer speaks both immediately and prophetically, to time now and time future. In the first instance, the poet helps people survive the present, constructing, through images and song, a recognizable pattern of the way the world strikes one at a peculiar moment in history.

The exceptional poem is the one that so seizes control of things, discovering a pattern or, at times, imposing a pattern on the universe, that it literally makes men and women see in particular shapes, in time. In this sense, the poem serves an immediate purpose. So it is proper to speak of the uses of a poem, just as one speaks of the uses of a building or a painting. The uses of a poem are many, particularly since because of its form it improves on nature (which usually remains a mystery). The poem, as intellect and feeling, reveals nature for what it is, in space and time. In another sense, the poem is always doomed to extinction, like any person, like any man-made thing.

The immediate use of the poem is survival. It gathers and objectifies our feelings in such a way that we can "stand" them; thus we are not undone by the pressures of the moment, but are brought to enjoy and even love them. So while it is true that poetry is a criticism of life, it is also a love song, an endorsement, an incantation, a hymn in praise of life. And as life changes, responding to the pressure of the moment, the poet must change, and our aesthetic must change to include the work of the new, the original, the revolutionary.

The history of one poem, or of one poet, will serve. T.S. Eliot's *The Wasteland* is a good example. As a description of the post-World War I malaise that undid a generation (one cannot talk of the poem without falling under its spell of language and concept, without thinking, even feeling, as it does) the poem captured the sense of flux, change, confusion, inherent in the war experience. Yeats' "The Second Coming" and Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms* served a similar purpose, dramatizing the futility of a world temporarily undone by the brutality, the unimaginable destructiveness of man, of his brutality in the midst of a so-called "civilization." To the sensibility, the war was a staggering fact. Europeans had inflicted pain on others, divided and exploited other peoples for centuries; but never on such a mass scale had they destroyed one another, and never before with such efficiency. What could one think, what could one feel, but that all the glories of the past have come to "nothing," that nature had, in a sense, been undone, so that April brought not the promise of new life, but a hint only of continuing death.

But of course this malaise is both documented and at the same time controlled by the poem. There is a hint that it may even cease if only by the sound of the thunder at the end of the poem. No water, no new life, but only promised.

Now the ending of *The Wasteland,* for me at least, is the most puzzling and perhaps unsuccessful section of the poem—it seems, like the ending of *Huckleberry Finn,* a fake. Karl Shapiro is quite right in suggesting that Eliot tried to force a theological solution to a prob-

MICHAEL TRUE *is an associate professor of English at Assumption College in Worcester, Massachusetts.*

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lem that is more deeply psychological, political, anthropological—the moment in the rose garden, the mystical experience, the peace that surpasseth all understanding just won't do. They only connect nothing with nothing, and pretend that some resolution has been reached. Quite rightly, Eliot in his later poetry tried to give that mystical experience more substance (but obviously didn't). The later poetry quickly runs to fat—it is second-rate poetry, because not poetry of the glands and intellect, but only of wishful thought. Its failure is the failure of the post-World War I world, the failure of a solution to problems unleashed by the war—problems that we, to our tragedy, still try to evade; falling into a second World War and maybe into a third, we still try to solve our problems in Eliot's way, by evading them, by forcing a theologically conservative pattern upon a situation in which God is dead (to stick to the theological framework) or in which we must find God in new and unpredictable places. Eliot thought he still lived in the church, and probably in a Cistercian habit. Allen Ginsberg solved that problem in his great poem *Howl,* saying that if God is alive, He lives in a madhouse, not in the person of the religious contemplative, but in the person of his insane friend, Carl Solomon.

No doubt we will discover the limitations of Ginsberg's vision in fifty years, as we now recognize the limitations of Eliot's vision, for our time. But Eliot helped us survive one horrible test, at least by seeing a continuation of life as possible, even with the knowledge and memory of a brutalizing event; maybe Ginsberg's positive vision will help us through an even more difficult time. His voice is the strongest, surely, but only one of several since 1955 that deserves an attentive audience. Warning against and prophesying our new and undiscovered tragedies, these poets sing an incantation joyous or horrifying, but in any event sustaining.

II

Recent American poetry has addressed itself to the problem of survival in three distinct ways: (1) through wit and irony, through satire, a traditional defense of a person on the brink of disaster (isn't that, after all, what all those marvelous comic films out of the Depression are all about?); (2) through social protest in a direct confrontation with contemporary social problems, and (3) through shock, poems in praise of madness that call for revaluation of values, a revolution in consciousness. There are a number of poems that might represent each of these three categories, and several extraordinary individual poems by Ginsberg, Roethke and Bly in which all three come together. But for purposes of identification and clarification, I choose three short poems by other writers that suggest a common theme in the new poetry.

Wit and irony play an important part in the poetry of survival. As Henry Fielding suggested two centuries ago, satire serves the social purpose of allowing mankind to laugh itself out of its bad humor. It is an indirect, but still sometimes successful means of correcting a corporate folly. The satiric muse has never been particularly evident in American poetry, but the numerous corporate follies to which we have been subjected in recent years have provoked a number of excellent satiric verses, Horatian and Juvenalian in tone—Reed Whittemore's "Reflections Upon a Recurrent Suggestion by Civil Defense Authorities That I Build a Bombshelter in My Backyard" among them.

In the mid-1950s, there was a great to-do about the need for everyone to protect himself against an impending atomic attack (bein' as the Commies were about to launch an attack any day). Diligent and sometimes profit-motivated civil defense ministers and bomb-shelter builders recommended that everyone pack his basement with sandbags while awaiting impending doom. Some particularly anxious people even stockpiled coffee and sugar, preparing for imminent nuclear raids. The irony of all of this was, of course, that being in a bomb shelter during an atomic attack was small defense; it means—then as now—that one broiled below ground, rather than fricasseed above ground. Or, so we learned later. In exposing the gothic pretentions of this absurd position, Reed Whittemore's poem was both accurate and prophetic; the speaker's obstinate good sense, emphasizing the ridiculous pretense of official policy, gave the poem an intensely practical dimension: "But I'll not, no, not do it, not go back/And lie there in that dark under the weight/Of all that earth on that old door for my state./I know too much to think now, that if I creep/From the grown-up's house to the child's house, I'll keep."

It is in poems such as Whittemore's, or in several of Karl Shapiro's "bourgeois poems" that one hears a satiric voice, witty, irreverent, mildly contemptuous of the status quo in poetry, in aesthetics, in critical judgment. Shapiro took an earlier generation of poets to task in his interesting polemic, *In Defense of Ignorance* (1965), too, calling for a new language and a new idiom; but the poetic statements in *The Bourgeois Poet* (1964) emphasize the importance of new standards more effectively through wit, than the essays did through polemic:

> Lower the standard: that's my motto. Somebody is
> always putting the food out of reach. We're tired
> of falling off ladders. Who says a child can't paint?
> How many generations will this take? Don't think
> about it, just make a start. (You have made a start)
> . . . The law of gravity is the law of art. You first,
> poetry second, the good, the beautiful, the true
> come last. As the lad said: We must love one another or die.

These poems, like most comic writings, are deadly serious. The threat of annihilation hangs in the air, like

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some contagious disease, the speaker anxious, but composed, his voice urbane and slightly critical.

In the poetry of social protest, the concern for survival is more obvious, more immediately apparent. One of the major achievements of American poetry of the past twenty years is that the poetry of social concern is of such high quality. Unlike much of the protest poetry of the 1930s, its effectiveness grows not only out of an intensity of feeling, but also out of the form, the authority of the speaker's voice, the leap, as Robert Bly would call it, from the conscious fact to the unconscious feeling. There are now at least three anthologies of poetry against the war in Vietnam (before the recent special issue of *Poetry*); some of these poems, such as Denise Levertov's "Live at War," from *To Stay Alive* (1971), are exceptional poems by any standard—far beyond their use as effective instruments of education on the issue of the war, at the center of teach-ins and rallies and public protests. What is true of established writers is true of younger poets as well, particularly in that remarkable volume, *Winning Hearts and Minds: War Poems by Vietnam Veterans* (1972). In telling their story, in verse, the editors argue quite directly for a recognition of poetry as a means of survival, and a "Note to the Reader," stresses the special utility of their book: "Poetry is meant to be practical, Poetry is meant to be sound." And in a final, direct, challenge: "Read it aloud/Recopy it/Dramatize it/Give it as a gift/And sing it/Poetry is a human gift./Use it."

In the midst of social turmoil, poets have helped to understand, to clarify, to help us along in a way and with a competence that is still surprising, especially to anyone educated in the Cold War years, in an age when poetry tended to be primarily an academic affair. As social upheaval touches the universities, the academy faces the problem of survival, too, and the question of priorities provokes some basic questioning. X.J. Kennedy's brief poem, "Teacher," is representative: "In my nightmare, I'm fighting to snatch poetry books/Out of a fire my students make of them/To warm a freezing child."

In the poetry of social concern, in writings by black poets, there is an involvement and identification and sympathy, a meaningful rather than superficial relationship with the victims of injustice. The tone of this poetry reminds one of Orwell, in *Down and Out in Paris and London*, or of Pablo Neruda's political poems. But it is new to American poetry and, in depth of feeling and strength of form, it is the first of its kind since similarly strong poems by Kenneth Patchen and Muriel Rukeyser, during the 1930s. As a link between the protest poets of the present generation and those of an earlier period, John Beecher's brief statement "Poetry for Survival" strikes the proper note. In Germany, after the defeat of Hitler and before returning to the United States, Beecher became a close friend of a Russian seaman, a survivor

FREDERICK MORGAN

THE PUPPETS

What raised these puppets high above
our common, struggling flesh?
Righteousness, American-style,
well fortified by cash.

What kept them there? The shield of power
obscuring false and true.
What dragged them out into the light?
The courage of a few.

Why did they cheat and bite and plot
an end to decency?
Because to puppets each true man
is marked as *enemy*.

For what can things contrived of wires,
glue, plastic, styrofoam
do except hate the honest ones
sprung still from flesh and bone?

Nerve-radiations from what brain
waggle those legs and arms?
The programs coded in the skull
contain their fixed alarms

until each well-groomed manikin
turns "human" in the end
diffusing through the ambient airs
the "person" he pretends—

of smooth-faced ad-man bright and glib,
adept at mouthing lies—
or old false lawyer, pouchy-lipped
with deadness in his eyes—

or crew-cut fundamentalist
California bred
holding the crimes of righteousness
sealed in his bullet head . . .

But the Big Puppet, what of him
still sitting on the wall
wearing a crown on his false head,
who never speaks at all

except to nix the claims of truth
by privilege of that crown:
how many repetitions, friends,
before we pull him down?

—Dear Muse of 1973
who see our injured state,
shore up some emblem from the past
to signify its fate!

The blinded Belisarius
holds in his arms his guide,
that poisoned youth whose agony
reveals our darker road.

FREDERICK MORGAN'S *selection of poems,* A Book of Change *(Scribners), was a 1973 National Book Award nominee.*

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of a German prisoner-of-war camp where he had been allowed to retain in his cell a single book, the poems of Alexander Pushkin. The book literally kept the Russian alive through four years of horror and degradation, and when the two men parted, the Russian gave Beecher his Pushkin, for remembrance.

Back in the United States, Beecher suffered something of an "internal exile" during the McCarthy years, blacklisted for refusing to sign a loyalty oath and, as a sociologist, went unemployed for nine years, during which time he returned to writing poetry. Nobody would publish what he wrote, so he taught himself to print and became his own publisher and eventually earned a living reading and selling his poems of protest and prophecy. Beecher's conclusion: "My Russian friend was right. Poetry can save your life."

Survival in a mad, mad, mad, mad, mad world is a psychological as well as a sociological problem, and poems calling for a new definition of sanity in the midst of an insane world address themselves to this particular need.

Praise of madness in poetry is an old, even traditional theme. A famous speech in *Midsummer Night's Dream* discusses the natural affinity among the lunatic, the lover and the poet. In contemporary poetry, Roethke's "In A Dark Time" asks the pertinent question: "What's madness/but nobility of soul at odds with circumstance?" To stay alive, to remain human, one must escape "the normal"; insanity may prove the surer way. In Roethke's poems, the choice is painful, but inevitable, not as an escape from reality, but as a rite of passage to new life and real faith.

Several of Karl Shapiro's brief prose poems develop the same theme, less persistently: "Rhyme or reason, you can't have both. Fiction or truth, you can't have both." At the very least, poetry provides a link between the two worlds, but its association with abnormality remains essential: "When the last door closes in the

SAMUEL HAZO

ON THE METROLINER I REMEMBER THAT TO BE IS TO REMEMBER

Passing mountains of crushed cars,
I realize my kingdom's gone.
Behind me stay the streets
of triplebolted doors, dog
waste and armed custodians.
Double-paneled windows
filter out New Jersey's smog
while Muzak's cushion music
gasses me asleep.
I wake
to non-America.
The badge
is hair
The code is noise.
Barreling through Trenton, I count
karate parlors by the fives.
Bumper stickers blare
the new theology.
I want
to swallow snow and drink
rain, tell pollsters I'm my own
majority, re-read the lives
of Lincoln and Geronimo.
Who cares?
The crowd still wants Barrabas
while the crowd's evangelist and Mr.
Anybody marry God and Caesar
on prime time.
Shepherds have
sheep's heads and sheep's habits.
Central Unintelligence insults
intelligence.
Unfree unlove
is for the dogs . . .
When was it
any better?
Any worse?
With
countrymen who can't not win
and seldom question, questions
are a fool's profession.
Still,
I question.
Between what used to be
New York and what's no longer
Philadelphia, I resurrect Diogenes.
My seat becomes the tub
I sleep in.
My overcoat's my blanket,
and my roof's the sky.
To every
Alexander on the march, I send
condolences and bonedust.
To all
who ask me where I think I'm going,
I explain I'm going where I think.
And as for finding one just man
to prove that justice still
is possible?
I'll take the brightest
lantern on the brightest morning
of the brightest summer of the almanac
and look and look and look.

SAMUEL HAZO's *book of poems,* Once for the Last Bandit *(U. of Pittsburgh Press), was a nominee for the 1973 National Book Awards.*

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wintry afternoon at the main gate of the asylum, you enter your car with a sigh. Behind you lies the only world you know. Those in the traffic are on the waiting list. I'll tell you all I know. I owe it to someone I've forgotten."

In Ginsberg's *Howl,* the journey through madness makes it possible for one to view the world, once again, as holy. Insanity becomes not only a humane, but at times even a profoundly religious experience.

When man discovered, in the early twentieth century, that "his soul had been cut away," as Orwell put it, he lived momentarily on the verge of panic—the concept of "existential man" gathered its meaning from several imaginative characters rendered impotent by their fears. A persistent theme in the new poetry is that man, to survive, must have done with such conceptions of himself, that he must laugh at or celebrate his absurdity and thereby embrace the "demons" he formerly shunned. It represents a significant change in attitude over the poetry of Eliot's generation and calls at the very least for a new approach. Auden's statement that "poetry makes nothing happen" may have been the appropriate attitude for an earlier time; the voice of the new poetry, however, is more definite about its purpose and its usefulness, and challenges any serious critic of poetry to begin thinking about a new aesthetic. It raises questions not only about the quality of life, in a world on the edge of doom, but also about how the quality of life may be changed; in all cases survival appears to be a basic concern.

It has not been popular in recent criticism to talk about the uses of a poem—aside from the fact that it is supposed to give pleasure (which, for many people, including myself, would be enough and perhaps even the highest good). But the pleasure of one age becomes the irrelevancy of the next. And one must define pleasure for this time and this place. At the moment our highest and most demanding pleasure happens to be, turns out to be, survival. When that is threatened (as anyone living in a nuclear age must agree it is), other pleasures take on a peculiar look. The immediate animal and human response to the threat of annihilation, among free persons at least, is a fierce determination to live. It is no accident, then, that we look for poems that in some way push us toward survival. I think that is not asking too much of poetry—or of poets.

WASHINGTON REPORT

THE HOT AND THE COLD OF IT

The energy problem, be it defined as a "crisis" or as a temporary short-circuit, illuminates less savory political, structural and psychological features of the American economy.

Once again, it demonstrates that the Nixon Administration itself is not in charge. The petroleum industry is. A harbinger of what's to come is the summoning of 250 oilmen to staff the President's timid program. The beleaguered President is borrowing on his dwindling capital to survive in office on a day-to-day basis. Mr. Nixon simply does not have the political capital, ravaged as it has been by the Watergate Affair, to go to the country with a firm, plain-speaking and effective energy-saving program, under which all sectors of American life are required to bear the burden equitably. Even if he were politically stable, his Administration, after all, is not known for its partiality for formulas of fair-shares for all.

There are diverse statistics flowing through the trade journals, but one recurring set indicates that oil consumption last year may be chargeable in the following proportion: 43 percent to industry; 24 percent to transportation; 14 percent to commerce and 19 percent to homes. At this writing, however, the householder is being asked to bear the immediate burden—to keep his cool and never mind anyone else's. This bears a resemblance to the burden of the ghetto dweller as a result of the Administration's social policy of "benign neglect" advanced by Mr. Moynihan & Co. in the first years of the Nixon Presidency. Amid the announced energy-shortage, the President is flying back-and-forth between Washington and his palatial estates in Florida and California. They may be cutting down on electricity at the White House, however, one wag suggests—all tapes must be edited by scissor. Night-time football games could be canceled "for the duration," but, then, that might offend George Allen of the Washington Redskins, currently Mr. Nixon's favorite coach.

Once again, the Nixon Administration is showing itself not to be of any redeeming social value. Nearly four years ago, a task force of the Nixon Cabinet recommended removal of an import quota system imposed upon Canadian oil; instead, it suggested a tariff system. Eighteen months later, the President indicated he would approve negotiations with Canada. Only in January of this year was the import-quota schedule eliminated. This was indecision. An example of incorrect decision occurred as a result of the price-freeze imposed in August of 1971. As a result producers preferred, because of permissible profit margins, making gasoline rather than heating oil. In January of this year, nearly 18

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months later, Mr. Morton, the Secretary of the Interior, testified in Congress that he was aware of the dislocation at the time. When asked, however, he said he did not discuss it with the supervisory Price Commission that could have made adjustments. In 1971, the Office of Oil and Gas in the Interior Department reported a shortage in refinery capacity was developing. But, again, no response. The Nixon Administration has acknowledged the need for research into alternative sources of energy. In fact, a research-and-development fund was proposed this summer. As much as $10-billion was suggested by the Nixon Administration. But the Administration sought permission to spend only slightly more than $100-million for the current fiscal year. Three-fifths of this sum had already been appropriated, but of this sum, the Nixon Administration, in an extravagant exercise of Presidential impoundment of funds, has refused to spend $20 million.

Nor does the President's objective of self-sufficiency in the matter of energy sometime in the 1980s seem attainable. Indeed, a study by the (Congressional) Joint Committee on Atomic Energy indicates this goal is unattainable. The study shows that in the 1980s the United States will have become even more dependent on imports. An estimated 30 percent of total oil consumption is now imported; this will increase to 50 percent long before 1980, probably in the early 1970s. The study does say that the differential between domestic fuel supplies and demands can be stabilized by 1980s. Not by new sources of energy, however, such as solar energy or extraction of hydrocarbons from oil shale. The Congressional study, moreover, points to the inefficiency of major existing conversion machinery—e.g., motor vehicles, which lose three-quarters of the heat contained in their fuel and electrical generating plants which convert to power only about 40 percent of the heat they use. In gross terms, efficiency in conversion and usage of energy will decline, according to the study, from 50 percent currently to 46 percent by 1980.

At one point, the study succinctly states: "For instance, the Nation has already ordered a large part of the electrical capacity that can be functioning commercially by the year 1980. It has already ordered every major rail-based mass-transit system that can be functioning by 1980; and the public still continues to commit the United States to an ever-increasing number of automobiles with their known poor energy consumption patterns."

The goal of self-sufficiency, then, is a distant one and, furthermore, one that has hazards—exploitation by those in the energy industry who have a financial interest and those in the economy as a whole who savor economic nationalism.

The problem at hand has generated discussions about pricing. Steep increases would curtail demand; but, correspondingly, these would have a greater impact upon those with low incomes. Currently, there is talk within the Congress that any appreciable profit-making by the energy industry should be taxed away and the garnered revenues channeled somehow to those in the lower-end of the income brackets. Publicly, at least, Mr. Nixon does not seem to recognize that his much-publicized support among blue-collar workers may be forfeited if they detect the affluent and the influential being less penalized.

The official declaration of an energy shortage is not without foreign-policy implications. Dr. Kissinger's frequent avowals of commonality with Europe may be dissolved unless some tangible offer is made to the countries of Western Europe in terms of establishing an oil-pooling arrangement in which we play a substantial part.

More pointedly, the energy problem, unless it is clearly and precisely stated in terms of the Middle East conflict, may bear bitter fruit for Israel and the Jewish community in America. The opportunity for political demagoguery is not beyond reach. The politician may step forward who says, in effect: "Warm houses for Americans: nuts to Israel." The formulation is erroneous, but in fact, a scattering of messages from constituents conveying just that message is beginning to arrive on the desks of officials of the Nixon Administration and of members of Congress. If shivering Americans are encouraged to become "fed up" with the Middle East conflict, the onus and the burden will fall upon Israel under the pretense of "even-handedness" on the part of foreign offices, including our own. Support for Israel is showing signs of hemorrhaging—not necessarily into hostility but into indifference. There is a changed attitude abroad, too—countries of West Africa, where Israel has a strong record of technical assistance, and among the nations of Western Europe. The Israeli Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Eban, does not appear to understand the possibility of ugly domestic ramifications in this country—at least not as reflected in his statements recently given here in the United States.

"Hitler is dead; but the bitch that bore him is again in heat," Bertolt Brecht once wrote.

Overall as to the energy problem, there are signs pointing both ways here in Washington as to how effectively the matter, both in its domestic and overseas aspects, will be dealt with.

Discouragingly, there is a little bit of Baghdad in this community by the Potomac River.

Many in Government still believe that the public good is the sum of private deals. Many have an unfailing responsiveness to the vibrations of major economic power. Many practice politics without profiles. Political men of Washington are noted for their avuncular amiabilities and their raw insecurities and their excitory dreams. Many in the Congress face the legislative process with the confusion of pupils taking multiple-choice tests. They confuse skirmishes won for triumphs, gestures for achievements, and apologies for reparations. They display a weakness for self-deception that rivals

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that of the crowing cock who believes his call summons the sun. They are silhouettes behind whom hard men of power, bartering properties and living, are attempting to thwart environmental statutes and legislation now moving through Congress.

The quotient is not encouraging.

But there are those who point in a constructive direction. Robert E. Hunter writes: "Any lasting solution to what is seen to be an energy problem must be sought not primarily in the wonders of technology but rather in the realm of politics, including the domestic politics of conservation. More specifically, it should be sought within the broader context of our evolving relations with other countries; within new institutions of international cooperation and old institutions that are revised and updated; in a renewal of our search for an international economic order in which many nations have a stake; in diplomacy and economic adjustment rather than in confrontation politics and military power; and, finally, through seeing ourselves as part of the outside world, and not as something separate."

Eminently sensible. We shall see. SISYPHUS

THE ART OF OBFUSCATION

THE SCREEN

Most buffs would say that in order to be good a mystery should have no loose ends. Whether the story is in literary or cinematic form makes no difference. The point is that in mysteries, plot should reign supreme. It should therefore stand to reason that Raymond Chandler is a lousy mystery writer. Though at least four Chandler novels have been made into films, the bench mark against which all others must be measured is Howard Hawks' *The Big Sleep;* and in both *The Big Sleep* and Robert Altman's new film based on a Chandler novel, *The Long Goodbye,* loose odds and endings abound. Hawks had to admit that in *The Big Sleep* there was one murder which even he couldn't account for. And in Altman's film, while there may not be any murders left over, there are any number of assignations and confrontations that finally have no relevance at all to the eternal mystery-story question, Who done it?

The reason is that this question doesn't interest Chandler very much. In Chandler's Philip Marlowe novels the question What is he like? is far more important than Who done it? It is a man's nature rather than his actions —character rather than plot—that Chandler is always trying to reveal. If his plots seem ragged or incoherent, it is because they are filled with scenes intended to contribute character development regardless of what havoc that causes in the plot itself.

None of this is to say, however, that Chandler's sensibilities and mentality are not still those of the mystery writer. A good mystery writer toys with his reader and manipulates him. He spends as much time putting the reader off the scent as putting him on it. Indeed, mystery writing is the one genre where it is as artful to be misleading as it is to be clear—the one art where obfuscation and distraction are essential. Chandler relies on these techniques just as lesser practitioners do, except that he uses them to develop character rather than advance the plot. A character in a Chandler story is almost never what he at first appears to be any more than, in another writer's work, the guilty party is the one we have been led to suspect.

In Altman's new film this suspense about character is exploited more fully than it was in *The Big Sleep*. Any dissimilarity between the two films is notable because Hawks' own screenwriter, Leigh Brackett, has also done the adaptation for Altman. Yet Altman's conception of the Chandler material, and especially of Marlowe, was obviously very different from Hawks' from the start. The secondary characters here—a friend (Jim Bouton) who gets Marlowe involved in a murder, a client (Nina Van Pallandt), and her husband (Sterling Hayden)—are not the only ones who are darkly complex and unpredictable. Marlowe himself is too. Altman seems to have figured that, if it's not to learn the true identity of the killer that we stay with a Chandler story, it must be to learn the true identity of the detective. His personality is what ultimately replaces the plot as the main attraction.

Hawks' way of acknowledging Marlowe's status was simply to make him quicker, smarter and wittier than everyone else. In that special sort of overlapping repartee which Hawks developed for movie dialogue, Marlowe always has the topper. He immediately sees through his client's various attempts to get rid of him or divert suspicion from herself. When a gangster tries to set a booby trap for him at the end, he senses it at once and has enough presence of mind to figure out how to spring it on the gangster instead. Hawks' Marlowe is the kind of guy always one step ahead of the conspirators against him.

But Altman's Marlowe is just the opposite. He's usually one step behind everybody else. (In fact at one point this is literally so as Marlowe, on foot, chases another character who's in a car, arriving breathless at each stoplight just as the car pulls away again.) You can see the difference in Altman's intentions from his casting of Elliott Gould. In Humphrey Bogart's rendition of Marlowe, the detective's characteristic expression—the one which tells us in scene after scene that Marlowe has just gotten the situation under control—is a look of ear-lobe tugging, knowingly smily bemusement. But Gould's characteristic expression is something much more quizzical and slack-jawed. He seems almost a chump, the kind of

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guy who's permanently out to lunch. In some ways Altman's Marlowe reminds me of Camus' Stranger. A little catch phrase that Altman and/or Brackett have added to Marlowe's dialogue is, "It's OK with me." This is Marlowe's refrain in almost any perplexing situation, and it echoes the Stranger's customary remark, "I could see no objection to it," which he utters about everything from making love to his own execution.

But Marlowe isn't really the Stranger, of course. In the end he turns out to be not the executioner's victim, but the executioner himself. This is his true identity, which we have been waiting throughout the film to discover, though it doesn't mean that the awkwardness and want of presence more apparent earlier are a put-on. On the contrary, I think Altman's whole purpose is to render Marlowe as someone by nature incapable of affecting disguises or subterfuge. Since the other characters in this film do nothing except that, Marlowe's inability to do it is what distinguishes him.

What's more, Altman's view of Marlowe is not only compatible with Chandler's, but gives Altman at last a suitable vehicle for the peculiar cinematic style he has been developing since *M*A*S*H*. Obfuscation and distraction are very much a part of that style, although I think even Altman himself has been unsure why. When I once asked him why he had made so much of the dialogue in *McCabe and Mrs. Miller* inaudible, he ducked the question and explained instead how he had done it, as if he hadn't really thought about why. But in *The Long Goodbye* Altman can use such techniques to efface the character of Marlowe and thus make the detective's personality appropriately less certain, more problematical. Conversations are cut off only half finished, nude women gambol in the background during key scenes, and important events occur out on the periphery of our vision or as an interruption to other events. While Marlowe and his client are having a crucial talk one night, for instance, on the window behind which they stand we can see, as yet unnoticed by them, the reflection of her husband wandering deranged into the surf to drown himself.

Even the murder that Marlowe eventually commits is done in an unprepossessing fashion. Marlowe delivers the bullet as if it were simply an interjection thrown into the conversation he's having with his victim, as if it were a mere moment's interruption. The exchange is all over before we even realize it was the big interjection, the long ellipsis: the final word. COLIN L. WESTERBECK, JR.

an exchange of views

'The Humanist Manifesto'

Mahwah, N.J.

To the Editors: I have just read Louis Dupré's useful and critical article, "The Humanist Manifesto" [Oct. 19] and reread the Manifesto itself. As one of its signers, and as a participant in the Dialogue to which Professor Dupré refers (April, 1972, New York City), I thought it might be help to add a comment or two—in the hope, perhaps forlorn, of continuing the Dialogue of which Professor Dupré despairs.

I have no doubt that, from Dupré's point of view, religion is misunderstood in the Manifesto which commits an unforgivable intellectual sin. Unfortunately, the Church of Dupré and the Church that many of us confront are not the same—and it is against the latter that much of the Manifesto is addressed. The Church we confront—in localities, in state legislatures, in official pronouncements, in hierarchical policies, and in "lay" organizations—still deals in the currency of authoritarianism, still seeks to ally itself with state power in order to enforce its will on the community, still intrudes, albeit covertly, in U.S. foreign policy. Ironically, at the very time the Dialogue was underway in New York in April of 1972, Cardinal Cooke and Mr. Nixon were engaged in a *pas de deux* on the abortion laws in New York. More recently, and as opportunistically, efforts to resectarianize public education have found a new alliance in official Church circles. We need not dig up past horrors to find current objects to which the Manifesto responds. Sadly, it fails to make clear the vital distinction between religion and its institutions—though it tries (something the earlier Manifesto could not even contemplate).

The language of the Manifesto—for which I hold no brief—admits the interpretation, but it is my view as one of its signers that theistic religion per se is *not* its main target. Fundamentalist religion certainly is, and fundamentalist religion is on the rise here and abroad. When, moreover, the crudest forms of religious faith and practice are indulged in by large groups of the population, ranging from the innocuousness of sentimental communitarianism to the disasters of faith healing, then the reference of the Manifesto to enemies of intelligence, reason, and hope is clear enough. Add to this the ubiquitous presence of Mr. Graham in the White House, and again the target of the Manifesto is not ex-

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actly obscure. I would join Professor Dupré, however, in wishing that the style of the Manifesto had been more explicit on this as on other matters, but I don't believe that it is quite as mysterious as all that.

I should add that there are a number of enemies other than religious obscurantism and fundamentalism challenged by the Manifesto . . . separatism in race relations, for example, or nationalistic chauvinism, or a "law and order" social ethic. What this tells us is that the Manifesto is a social and political document, not really a theological document at all. Unfortunately, these categories are obscured by a use of common symbols that occur within these various realms of discourse but that have different meanings in their respective realms. I agree that a more felicitious style and more careful document might have avoided some of the worst of our confusions. On the other hand, to secure the assent of more than 120 disparate and constitutionally unorganized individuals required a degree of linguistic diplomacy and even deliberate ambiguity that under other conditions would be intolerable. Were I—or any other person—to produce an essay under my own signature that read like the Manifesto I could rightly be condemned for sloppy work. When 100 or more produce a document, the criteria are different as the goals are. A Manifesto, after all, is not a philosophic monograph but an instrument of policy in the best sense of that word. I hasten to acknowledge the irony of humanist rationality forced to the uses of ambiguity but there it is just the same.

I must confess to being troubled by Professor Dupré's ad hominem reference to the apparent age of the "largest single category" of signers. That the Manifesto reflects its continuities with the first Manifesto is true enough and that some of its signers could as easily have re-issued the earlier document is also true. Indeed, by way of example, there is to my mind a relatively uncritical identification of reason with scientific method and an echo of other "19th century" themes. But then, a careful reading of the Manifesto shows the impact of the past 40 years, e.g., the less than whole-hearted acceptance of the technological imperative is reflected in the distinction between technical feasibility and social desirability. The continued, though still unintegrated references to "humility," "care," "concern," etc.—though not the unabashed but more honest, "love"—tells us that the Manifesto is indeed a transitional document. None of this is sufficient to my mind, but it is not mere echo either.

Finally, I do believe that the reference to "situational" ethics is just indefensible when merely asserted as it is in the Manifesto, and I would have to insist that "autonomous" ethics refers to something entirely different. By the way, without specific reference to its philosophic tradition, I don't think "autonomous" ethics conveys much in the way of meaning. The questions of ethical rules, sanctions, and knowledge are all raised by terms like these without any real attempt at response. The weak reference to "human experience" as source and sanction only begins to but by no means satisfies criteria of a significant ethical discourse. On the other hand, I do not think we have to accept Professor Dupré's existential, even Calvinistic and Augustinian, separation of religion from secular morality. A continuing dialogue—which I still hope for—when confronting the alleged situationalist would simultaneously have to confront the existentialist who operates on the same moral turf so to speak. Neither, I believe, has really come to terms with issues of moral objectivity.

Professor Dupré will recall that I was as affronted as he was by the uncharitable and unjust refusal of our humanist brethren to believe in the truthfulness of our Catholic brethren at the Dialogue. On the other hand, I know in a way that he perhaps could not, of the years of bitter and frustrating struggle for humanist survival, a struggle that may be over though I wouldn't want to bet on it. Here the Manifesto does not talk to Dupré *et al,* but past him to others unlike Dupré. It may be that it talks to a dinosaur already extinct and only thrashing its massive body around causing damage in its death throes. But it may be that the dinosaur is not yet ready to disappear, at least not without a little more help from a successor species. It is that latter species that is identified by the Manifesto in an imperfect fashion and that will be more adequately identified when, at long last, Manifesto III is written in a way that is far more inclusive than either of its predecessors. When that happens, I would hope that the Duprés of this world will be as much a part of it as the present signers of a confessedly temporary and certainly unfinished effort.

HOWARD B. RADEST
Professor of Philosophy,
Ramapo College of New Jersey

Chicago, Ill.

To the Editors: Louis Dupré must have had all his inner juices of hostility operating when he wrote, "The New Humanist Manifesto" article [Oct. 19]. Conceivably the job might have given him "spiritual" pleasure, so I would not want to give him a downer too soon. But then his article is full of invective, ridicule, and conceit. I feel I have to write a disclaimer.

The Manifesto, he asserts, is badly written (*He* does know how to write, so I take it), it sounds like the ecclesiastical jargon which popes use when they issue their pompous encyclicals (*He* makes tomes sound like poetry), it is written by dead-beat intellectuals who are out of touch with modern times, it misconceives the realities of the liberated church, and educated catholics, and it destroys any dialogue which exists or can exist between secular humanists and the religious ones, like Dupré who had to hand in their report cards as budding humanists when the Manifesto hit the front page of the *New York Times.*

"The list of signers hardly represents the segment of the intellectual community that is alive today." That's quite sad. But what community is that? His? What group is alive? His?

Dupré notes, "The Nazis were perfect 'situationists,'" after he saw the summary statement, "Ethics is autono-

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mous and situational." Yes, and Eichmann declared on his death bed, "I die believing in God." Does that mean also that all atheists glory in genocide?"

It is reassuring to know that most conservative catholics will allow an abortion when the mother's life is in danger, even tho it is difficult to find much tolerance in the debates one hears on this issue. The people who make this gratuitous remark know that medicine being what it is today there is almost no time when an abortion is decided upon to "save the life of the . . . etc."

The rigidity here, the presumption of the people determining a universal directive on the basis of ancient dogma, the repressive measures used against women in a sexist caste system, and the most hostile judgments made of the dissenters are part of a complex of attitudes which cause humanists to call for the liberation of ethics from creeds, and to call for a situational ethic which, among other things, prizes the rights of individuals themselves to participate meaningfully in the decisions which have to do with their own bodies and lives, and to help them in the process of taking responsibility to be truly human.

Humanists have a negative judgment about supernatural religion. Is that really strange? *They* misjudge and *they* misunderstand. Only people like Dupré are objective, and perfectly understanding. The truth is that humanists will never satisfy the complainers in any position they take. Of course they do not go along with the myths, the dogmatic assertions, the absolutizing, the exploiting of the naive, and the intimidating of the "non-believers"(?). Must they come back to the True Church? The implications are they are misguided, misanthropic, and hugely mistaken. At least they admit that they do not have The truth, The whole truth, and nothing but The truth. They do affirm that everyone has the same right to experience, to contemplate, to interpret reality, to reason, to criticize, to reject, to be free and to establish community on the basis of democratic principles.

The final tests are made on what has been done, what humanists are doing, and what humanism represents in the modern world. On any of these matters, humanism does not have to be defensive, or apologetic. The Manifesto can be seen, with all its imperfections, to be part of a new humanist era. It does clarify for many humanists a consensus worth proposing.

Dupré paints himself as breathlessly waiting for the next version. I doubt, when it comes that he will be less contentious.

HAROLD J. QUIGLEY
Signer of the Manifesto
Leader, Ethical Humanist Society
of Chicago

Buffalo, N.Y.

To the Editors: Of all the criticisms that have been leveled thus far against "Humanist Manifesto II" by theists, I must confess that Louis Dupré's criticisms [Oct. 19] have wounded me most. First, because I have high regard for Professor Dupré and his liberal instincts —having participated in the first Catholic/Humanist Dialogue with him—and second, because he seems to have totally missed the central point of the Manifesto: the need to bring together people of different viewpoints, not to exacerbate differences. Space prohibits me from responding to all of the criticism raised by Dupré; I will address myself to the most important, in the hope that we can find common ground.

Professor Dupré criticizes the Manifesto for not being fair to the religious believer. He asks whether those within the theistic fold can *also* be considered as humanists. My answer is yes, but it all depends upon whether one's interpretation of God and religion are allowed to interfere with humanistic moral and social values. Let me make it clear that the Manifesto is *not* critical of all religions, but only those that we believe suppress the individual, impose an authoritarian code, or impede cooperative solutions to pressing human problems. Humanism, in a deep sense, is itself a *religious* humanism, since it involves commitment and devotion!

Thus "Humanist Manifesto II" asserts: "In the best sense, religion may inspire dedication to the highest ethical ideals. The cultivation of moral devotion and creative imagination is an expression of genuine spiritual experience and aspiration. . . . We appreciate the need to preserve the best ethical teachings in the religious traditions of humankind, many of which we share in common."

Humanists reject only ". . . features of traditional religious morality that deny humans a full appreciation of their own potentialities and responsibilities or that place revelation, God, ritual or creed above human needs and experience. . . ." I should point out that the Manifesto is equally critical of dogmatic utopian ideologies, such as certain forms of Marxism, that divide people.

It is true that virtually all of the signers of "Humanist Manifesto II" appear to be skeptics about theistic claims of a transcendental realm. But we extend an open hand to theists who share common concerns about the future of mankind.

The Manifesto is a document in futurism. It maintains that most of the inherited isms—including theism, Marxism, even dogmatic humanism—are inadequate to the tasks ahead.

The document seeks to set out a number of positive moral principles: the centrality of the freedom of the individual against repressive institutions (whether of church or state) the autonomy of ethics, tolerance in sexuality, (abortion, birth control, divorce, sex between consenting adults, moral and sexual education), civil liberties (including the right to suicide, euthanasia, death with dignity), participatory democracy, separation of church and state or ideology and state, moral equality, integration, women's rights, the need to transcend national sovereignties, the need for world population control, ecological and economic planning, a renunciation of war, a defense of world government, etc.

Professor Dupré says that "Humanist Manifesto II" is unfair to theistic believers who are humanists. We are surely willing to leave to Professor Du-

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pré his private religious belief; our major concern is the public expression of a religious morality in action, especially as it concerns others.

I must confess that I am mystefied by Professor Dupré's own religious posture. (How representative is it of the church?) Which of the above moral values would he defend? From which would he dissent? In what sense are his moral principles dependent upon his religion? We wish to judge religion by the consequences of its practice. We can (and should) argue about faith and knowledge, evidence and justification. Yet for us, of greatest moment is the need to work together to solve the problems of war and peace, population control, freedom, etc.

Professor Dupré's statement, "The communion of faith . . . (is) . . . the union of those who in a particular way crave redemption . . . it means that our own efforts are never the final decisive factor . . ." is a special cause for concern.

For the non-theistic humanist, "No deity will save us; we must save ourselves." We are responsible for the future of humankind and cannot flee from that.

In any case, "Humanist Manifesto II" makes clear the need for dialogue: "We urge that parochial loyalties and inflexible moral and religious ideologies be transcended. . . . We will survive and prosper only in a world of shared humane values. We can initiate new directions for humankind; ancient rivalries can be superseded by broad-based cooperative efforts. . . . At the present juncture of history, commitment to all humankind is the highest commitment of which we are capable; it transcends the basic allegiance of church, state, party, class, or race in moving toward a wider vision of human potentiality."

In a spirit of humility and tolerance, I ask our Christian fellow-humanists not to abandon dialogue. It would be as unfair for you to suspend dialogue because we don't believe in "God" as it would be for us to end discussion because you *do*.

PAUL KURTZ
Editor, *The Humanist*

Reply

• Professor Radest's gentle reply to my critique rekindles my hope of a future collaboration between Christians and Humanists. It also forces me to qualify some of my critical expressions. He is right in distinguishing the way in which a Catholic intellectual experiences his faith and the unpleasant impact which its lingering institutional obscurantism has on the outsider. My article reflected primarily on Catholic principles and conveniently overlooked a substantial part of Catholic practice. Professor Radest is equally correct in his assertion about the unspectacular but nevertheless real progress in humanist ideals over the last forty years. I would find it so much easier to cooperate on the important causes of our day with an "adversary" of his charity and perceptiveness than with many, many of my fellow Christians. This in itself shows that we may be much closer to one another than I had suspected.

• In fairness to the Humanist Manifesto II, *Commonweal* readers who are unfamiliar with the original document should know that its quality and tone substantially differ from those of Mr. Quigley's letter.

• My relations with Paul Kurtz and several Humanist leaders in this country never gave me occasion to doubt the genuineness of their intentions for a rapprochement with religious believers. It would be regrettable if my article had caused such a doubt in the reader's mind and I welcome this opportunity to restate my belief in the sincerity of the Humanists' intentions.

My real problem is with the presentation of the religious position in the Manifesto. Paul Kurtz and I clearly differ on what religion *is* and even on what it *can* be. He correctly quotes my words "crave redemption" and "our efforts are never the final decisive factor" as central to what I consider to be the essence of the religious attitude. They are also the ones that give him "a special cause for concern." To him "no deity will save us; we must save ourselves." Here we have the whole disagreement in a nutshell.

For the believer "to save oneself" is a contradictory expression, even though he must agree that man and man alone bears the full responsibility for his own future and that of the world. But the believer's need of salvation is of a different kind. It consists in a basic awareness of incompleteness and fundamental inadequacy that compels him to reach for a reality over which he holds no control and forces him to say after he has accomplished everything the humanist could possibly expect him to do: I am a useless servant.

This may sound like an escape from the moral task or, at least a relativization of its urgency. But it is this very idea of a higher salvation which enables the brother of charity and the sister of the poor to spend their entire lifetimes in hospitals, asylums and nursing homes with the rejects of humanity. Although there may be less talk about "moral duty" among believers and indeed, a real danger of inactive resignation, the moral commitment nevertheless is all it is to the humanist and a sacred obligation as well.

Paul Kurtz asks me which of the "moral values" stated in his letter I would defend. My answer is: all of them except tolerance in abortion and the right to euthanasia. (Even those I cannot oppose without major qualification.) He wonders in what sense my moral principles are dependent upon my religion. Certainly not in the sense that I consider religion to be indispensable to morality. I agree with the Manifesto that morality is autonomous: man needs no divine command to know what is moral. By a painstaking search he himself must *discover* what promotes and what threatens his humanity at each particular period of history. Any unquestionable acceptance of concrete rules of conduct of the past may jeopardize his morality in the present. (We all know how often believers continue to sin against that rule!) But the search for the moral optimum receives a particular urgency from being also a sacred obligation. Moreover, ethical novelty, the courage to be more

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demanding has mostly been inspired by the same religious impulse that urges man to surpass himself. Jesus, St. Francis, the Buddha were great moral innovators even though the emphasis of their teaching was *beyond* the moral. I suspect that one has to be *more* than moral to keep one's morality open to new ideals. A humanism without transcendence runs the risk of stagnation. (This is not a Christian *ad hoc* argument: it is the very heart of the non-Christian philosopher Bergson's moral theory.)

Yet whatever the recognition transcendence may do or may fail to do, to believers it is essential and non-negotiable. To ask them to drop the idea of salvation is to invite believers to be without belief and to cease to be what they are. Still, Paul Kurtz's letter is to me a major sign of hope and an invitation to continue the dialogue. Because it clarifies that the Humanist's weariness of the idea of salvation is due to fear that the believer may not take his moral commitment seriously. His fear may in fact often be well-founded. But in principle autonomous morality does not conflict with sacred obligation. If we can dispel this misunderstanding we are in for a real dialogue.

LOUIS DUPRE
Dept. of Religious Studies
Yale University

BOOKS

THE INTIMATE TILLICH

CHARLES DAVIS

From Time to Time
HANNAH TILLICH
Stein and Day, $7.95

Paulus: Reminiscences of a Friendship
ROLLO MAY
Harper & Row, $5.95

A word readers immediately associate with Paul Tillich is "depth." It stands for his favorite range of metaphors and also for the sense of dark, confused profundity conveyed by much of his writing. His personal impact upon those who knew him was, we now learn, of the same order.

Hannah Tillich, whose life as the wife of Paulus (his German name), reduced her to "a piece of bleeding, tortured womanhood," still admits, "he was always profound enough for me . . . he broke the thin ice of a superficial consciousness." The many women whose "relentless assault" had, Hannah tells us, broken their marriage into small pieces experienced that profundity: "Whether they cursed him or loved him, he had pushed the knowledge about the *mysterium tremendum* a little beyond their narrower concept of life, love, *and* the powers of enchantment and destruction." And, more prosaically, Rollo May writes: "He seemed to take for granted that all of us there —as Socrates—would be at all times concerned with the ultimate questions of reason and love and death."

Rollo May's book does not stand up very well alongside Hannah Tillich's. A graceful tribute indeed from a friend and disciple, but its weight of psychological comment is too heavy for the slender foundation of biographical detail. The impact of the book might well be different upon those who knew Tillich in person, but for someone like myself who did not, Rollo May seems over-anxious to impose a favorable interpretation upon a largely unrevealed life-story. And if Hannah Tillich's very frank autobiography, the impending publication of which apparently caused much prior alarm, is meant to be, as it were, the text to which Rollo May refers, his comments leave me unconvinced.

Tillich in a letter asks: "Was my erotic life a failure, or was it a daring way of opening up new human possibilities?" May comments: "I have no hesitation in stating my own conclusion: it was clearly the latter." Clearly? That's blatantly special pleading. The facts at the very least are ambiguous. May speaks of the secrecy with which Tillich surrounded his erotic life: "Secrecy, I have said, but not dishonesty. Honesty is the accurate recognition within oneself of feelings and the consequences of one's behavior. This Paulus certainly had. I have never heard of his telling an actual untruth in this regard; he was singularly free of repression or self-deceit." But what comes across quite forcefully from Hannah Tillich's account is Paulus' inability to face up to his own sexual behavior. After one incident, Hannah tells us, "I refused to let Paulus speak to me alone about his 'friendship' with her. I had had so much experience with his denying every fact until he made me believe him and not my own eyes, and I was sick of being betrayed. After dinner, when the children were in bed, Paulus, our friends, and I sat in the beautiful library of the house and began to talk. He could not evade the facts with which I faced him. He threw himself on the floor, screaming and kicking, because this time there was no way out. When we were alone, as usual he was contrite and full of regret."

Other indications suggest that Tillich's unconventional behavior was due to a serious inability to integrate his personality, not to any bold venturing on the frontiers of human experience. Particularly striking are Hannah's scattered remarks to the effect that Tillich could cope with life only by turning

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everything into words, into abstractions. "He transmuted his personal experience by shaping it into golden words meant for a world audience. He forsook life for the word." The retreat from intimacy to an audience, from reality to words, was palpable during the illness of one of his children: "I could have found the pages of the sermon he had written while his daughter was very ill. He had not taken her in his arms and healed her with love. Being close to her had aroused fear in him. He had to transform her into the magic of words for all the world to hear." Hannah found herself "cursing him for turning me into an abstraction." But even here his magnetism was irresistible: "I went and listened to his lectures and sat at his feet with shining eyes, just as the others had, soaking in the power of his spiritual being, forgetting about the biological aspects of abstraction."

Hannah Tillich is an unusually gifted woman in her own right. She has given us a remarkable self-portrait in her attempt to come to an awareness of what she had lived with the man, who, as she says, "was never mine, because he could never protect. He was ecstasy and despair, with no discrimination. For him, everything was power and force." I recommend her book to those drawing up courses in women studies.

With regret, though with understanding, I read she has burned, as he had wished, Tillich's intimate papers. The full story as built upon a critical assessment of all the data will therefore never be told. However, even if from a single, very personal standpoint, Hannah has given us a glimpse into the muddy confusion as well as grandeur of Tillich's romantic personality. Does this glimpse help to explain why he uses abstract concepts in a mythological fashion, weighting them with hidden emotional content? Is perhaps the dark profundity of some of his writing due less to intellectual penetration than to extraneous obfuscation? Wiser to avoid such tempting speculations and evaluate the man by his writings rather than the writings by the uncertain image of the man.

Frieda Lawrence

ROBERT LUCAS

Viking, $8.95

Letters to Felice

FRANZ KAFKA

ERICH HELLER and JURGEN BORN, Eds.

Schocken, $17.50

JOHN HEIDENRY

By writing *Zelda* Nancy Milford not only served up a portrait of the artist's wife as a young and usually soused nymphomaniac, but also pioneered a whole new category of literature that might be called "secondary biography." Where it all may lead to one hesitates to think: eventually, of course, to *Jesse* (Mrs. Joseph Conrad) and a life of Mrs. Victor Hugo, if ever there was one. Already we have seen *Hadley*, the first Mrs. Hemingway. And certainly in these days of the detumescence of male chauvinism, we can expect something about the men friends and husbands or the brother of Dorothy Parker or the Brontes, and perhaps a his-and-her set on Colette, and biographical dictionaries of the catamites of Proust and Wilde.

Still, if the history of *l'éternel féminin* has any validity, its two prototypes are best impersonated by those nymphets Eloise in the twelfth century and Beatrice in the thirteenth. Justly the first never gave her admirer a moment's peace while the other, as it were, without her consent but with her knowledge, was made to submit to a kind of mystical rape, being as she was the object of an ungovernable passion in the heart of the poet. What lesson there is to be learned in all of this may be that both Abelard and Dante ended up their days in a monastery, their lives filled with woe and misfortune.

Frieda Lawrence and Felice Bauer were in their ways reincarnations of Eloise and Beatrice, though they had little else in common besides German

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nationality and the fact that both were loved by two of the queerest geniuses then writing fiction. But Frieda was an aristocratic von Richtofen whose considerable strength, or weakness, of character made it possible for her to leave her first husband and abandon three children of that marriage for an impoverished English writer six years her junior. Felice Bauer, on the other hand, was working-class and Jewish and employed as a secretary in a firm in Berlin that manufactured Parlographs (early dictating machines); and little in her life proved to be much out of the ordinary. Nothing, that is, except that from September 1912 to October 1917 she fell victim to a staggering word-storm of letters, sometimes two or three a day, mostly all of them peevish, reproachful, whining, tyrannical; and it is an indication of the strength, or weakness, of her character that she never told the young insurance clerk writing from Prague to get lost.

When Frieda first met Lawrence she was thirty-two and living a rather routine and sexually meager existence in Nottingham as Mrs. Ernest Weekley, wife of a professor of philology who later was to pen a bestseller of his own titled *The Romance of Words*. The occasion for the meeting was Lawrence's visit to his former teacher to inquire about a lecturer's post in a German university where Weekley had connections. Soon after, Frieda found herself faced with an appalling and tragic choice, for Lawrence resisted her first advances, seeing any clandestine affair as dishonest; and made it a condition of their love that she break forever from her husband, children, the security of her home—with anything, in short, that derived from the contamination of her previous union. Her decision to run off with the coal-miner's son nearly wrecked her husband's life, estranged her from her children for many years (though she missed them sorely and her attempts to see them were at the heart of the many vituperative, crockery-breaking quarrels between the Lawrences that later were to become so famous); but in exchange she travelled across the world and became acquainted with some of the most notable people of her generation. She was also loved, as few women are in fact loved by men, steadfastly and with at times a nearly outlandish sense of exaltation.

One startling revelation in this biography, which Frieda herself makes no allusion to in her own memoirs published after Lawrence's death, is her complaint to friends that Lawrence was impotent all the while he was writing *Lady Chatterley's Lover*—his next to last book. Certainly Frieda had a greater sexual appetite than the great apostle of sexual revolution (who paradoxically was the most unmitigated sexist of all—never mind that he was also a puritan—and who even demanded later, for respectability's sake, that the two of them get married); and she entered into numerous casual affairs with the likes of Prussian cavalry officers and Italian peasants—one of whom, Angelo Ravagli, she was eventually to set up as her third husband in New Mexico.

"I do think a woman must yield some sort of precedence to a man," Lawrence once complained in a letter to Katherine Mansfield, "and he must take this precedence. . . . I can't help it, I believe this. Frieda doesn't. Hence our fight." In the end, though, it was Lawrence who submitted. Nature had made him sterile and tubercular, and fate had determined that the woman he marry have as unservile and lordly (after all, *she* was from the baronial family) a streak as he. Viewed in this light, *Lady Chatterley's Lover* is a pathological attempt at self-arousal. Lawrence failed, however, to restore himself and like Abelard died half a man—while Frieda, with better sense than her predecessor, went on to other conquests and a happy old age.

Kafka likewise was tubercular and that fact was excuse enough to cause him twice to cancel his engagement to Felice, described by him as "a happy, healthy, self-confident girl." But in the Kafkaesque world that kind of normalcy had no place—nor was there any possible room for love in Kalka's heart to begin with. He tried to explain to her that literature was his life, but how could her efficient, practical mind comprehend? Years later in his diary he was to confess that he had never known in himself the words "I love you" but only "the expectant stillness that should have been broken by 'I love you,' that is all I have known, nothing more." Thus not surprisingly the letters evince an attitude of one who will never be more than an amateur, perhaps that is to say a dissembler, in love—Kafka chiding Felice for not writing as often as he, imploring her for photographs, demanding that she describe her day in minute detail—but keeping her informed too on the progress of his "repulsive little stories," like the one about the bedbug. And perhaps he supposed for a while that Felice might understand, being as she was in some ways herself Kafkaesque—had he not also been attracted, as he confided to his diary, by her "empty face that wore its emptiness openly"?

In the summer of 1916 Kafka spent two weeks with Felice in Marienbad and here briefly, it seems apparent, they became lovers. When later the oppressive vision of his private world bore down on him without pity, and Felice had long since married a Berlin businessman and now was the mother of two children, the only riddle that remained for him to solve was why he had been granted "those fourteen days of happiness."

"I write not as I speak, I speak not as I think, I think not as I ought to think, and so it goes on into the deepest darkness," Kafka wrote to his sister a few days before dissolving his first engagement to Felice. Ernest Weekley had one kind of romance with words, and Lawrence another; and Kafka another still. Lawrence tried to reconstruct the world—himself and Frieda—with words, but to no avail; but for Kafka there were only words. The real world—Felice and all she stood for—was unimportant to the point of being a nuisance. The letters to Felice are in fact letters Kafka wrote to himself. They form a battleground where daily he bombarded the enemy with petulance, broken vows, deceit (admitting to emotions he could not feel), and gave

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ominous warnings of a secret weapon called Literature, until finally some kind of truce was arranged; and Felice, and all that we commonly know as reality went away. Eventually she moved with her family to Switzerland, and finally to America, where she died in 1960. Frieda had died four years earlier in New Mexico in her 77th year.

Stephen A. Douglas

ROBERT W. JOHANNSEN

Oxford U. Press, $19.95

JOHN A. CARPENTER

Robert Johannsen's massive biography of Stephen A. Douglas is the first full-length treatment of the Democratic leader since publication of George Fort Milton's lively, but overly biased, work of the 1930s. It can stand without question as the definitive biography in that it is based on meticulous research and careful exposition of every aspect of Douglas' career. The documentation will satisfy the most demanding critic. No serious student of American history can afford to overlook this monumental work.

The style lacks the drama of Allan Nevins' *Ordeal of the Union* or the warmth of some other well-known biographies. But it is straightforward, largely unadorned, and suitable for a political biography which this, for the most part, is. Johannsen writes well; and basically he has nothing to apologize for—though at times the reader looks for, but seldom finds, a more colorful, exciting presentation. Above all, this work is objective. The author, it is true, has a sympathetic regard for his subject, but he has no hesitation in pointing out Douglas' rather numerous shortcomings. There are no dramatic surprises, no really new interpretations.

Douglas dominated the political scene of the 1850s. Clay, Webster, and Calhoun had ruled, along with Andrew Jackson, for the previous three decades. No one—not Fillmore, not Pierce, or Buchanan, not Abraham Lincoln—enjoyed the prominence, reputation, or prestige of the Little Giant during that time. Hence it is entirely appropriate that we have at last a full-length scholarly treatment of Douglas' role in that enormously significant period beginning with the Compromise of 1850 and extending through the secession crisis of 1860-61. The nation was passing through a great transitional stage marked by vast territorial expansion, industrial and commercial development, and above all the seemingly insoluble sectional controversy over slavery. Here we have a careful exposition of the momentous struggles which engrossed the political life of the nation: the passage of the Compromise; the tragic, yet inevitable, Kansas-Nebraska bill; the strains imposed on the unity of the Democratic party by the fight over the Lecompton Constitution; the emergence of Abraham Lincoln marked particularly by the Lincoln-Douglas debates; the drama of the Charleston Convention; the Presidential campaign of 1860; and, finally, the efforts to achieve compromise up to the firing on Fort Sumter in April 1861.

Despite Douglas' natural appeal as a colorful and pugnacious political leader, the reader cannot help but be aware of certain unattractive features in the man—qualities which Johannsen is candid enough to reveal, yet in such a dispassionate way that the reader, unless he is constantly on the alert, might not be completely aware of what is being conveyed. A case in point is Douglas' blatant racism. Now the belief in white supremacy was hardly unusual in mid-nineteenth century America, and Johannsen does not attempt to cover up his attitude which Douglas on numerous occasions enunciated in his public addresses and statements. Yet, from the vantage point of the second half of the twentieth century, one cannot help but be dismayed by Douglas' utter failure to comprehend the anachronism of human slavery in the western world, as Lincoln did, and direct his energies toward eradicating this evil. Douglas, while he was careful not to be the legal owner of slaves, had no hesitancy in allowing the Mississippi plantation, which had been the property of his father-in-law, to be legally held by his

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REVIEWERS

CHARLES DAVIS is chairman of the Department of Religion at Sir George Williams University in Montreal.

JOHN HEIDENRY, free-lance writer and critic, is at work on a novel.

JOHN A. CARPENTER is a history professor at Fordham.

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sons. And he was perfectly willing to derive income from the plantation. That Douglas easily tolerated slavery, as many a northern politician did not, is surely not to his credit and detracts from his standing as a far-sighted statesman.

The reader also is shocked by Douglas' adherence to a bellicose foreign policy stance, especially toward Great Britain. Throughout his career, he flirted easily with the prospect of war with England in what can only be described as irresponsible statecraft.

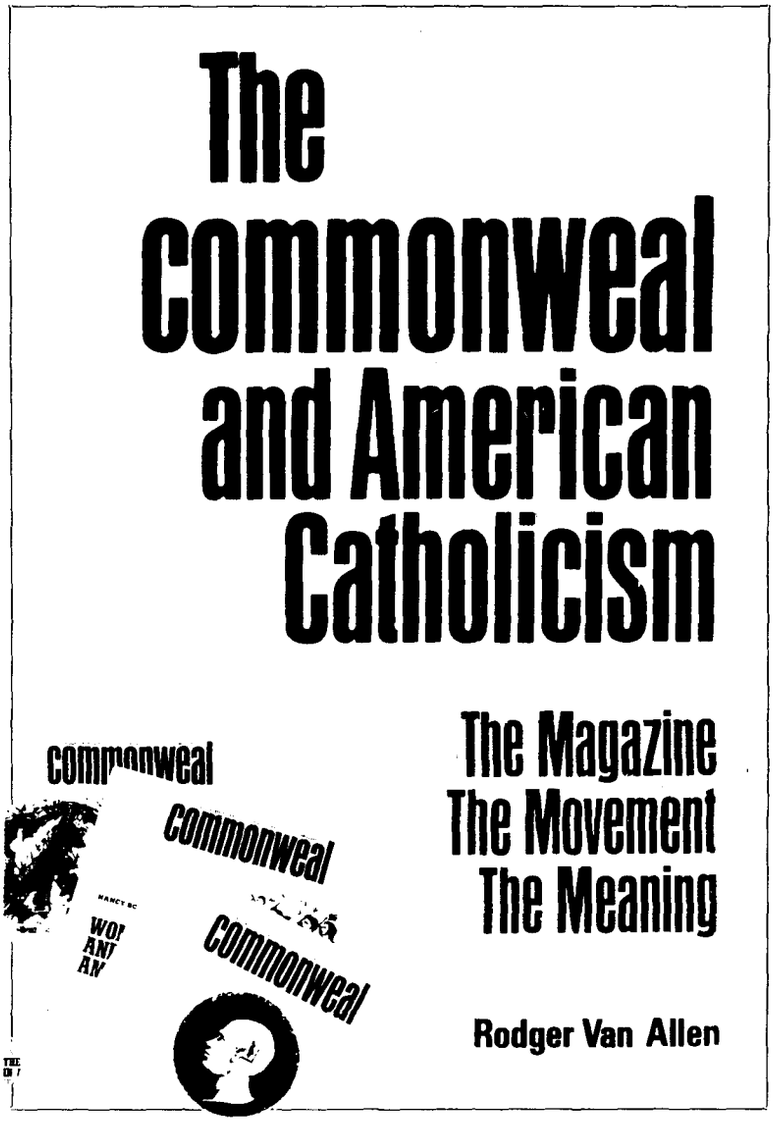
Also to be noted are Douglas' willingness, with some notable exceptions, to adopt the partisan position in his long Congressional career, his tendency to use rough, harsh language toward his opponents in debate, and his unpleasant personal habits—such as unkempt and disheveled clothing, and resort to heavy drinking. All in all, Douglas emerges from these pages as a rather unpleasant person.

Only a few controversial matters crop up in this biography. Johannsen, in his discussion of Douglas' motives for introducing the Kansas-Nebraska bill, strangely does not consider the possibility that Douglas was principally concerned with gaining Southern support so that he might win the Democratic nomination in 1856, or that Douglas had a personal financial interest in seeing that Chicago became the eastern terminus of a transcontinental railroad. The author does, to be sure, present a logical explanation based on Douglas' long-standing interest in a transcontinental railroad founded on national concerns, his record of various attempts to organize the Nebraska territory, and the popular sovereignty principle incorporated tacitly in the Compromise of 1850.

Johannsen makes clear what he believes to be Douglas' motivation in rejecting the Lecompton Constitution. It derived from principle alone. In the absence of any positive evidence to the contrary, perhaps we should take Douglas at his word. Yet the forthcoming Senatorial race of 1858 dictated his opposition to Lecompton. That is, in order to win re-election to the Senate, Douglas had no choice but to reject a constitution for Kansas which he knew his constituents would never swallow. Johannsen does not concede this possible motivation.

Finally, in his treatment of Douglas' role in the various efforts at compromise following Lincoln's election in 1860 up to the firing on Sumter, Johannsen leads the reader to conclude that there was a real chance for compromise which only Republican intransigence frustrated. We will never know, of course, what might have happened had the Republicans been more willing to agree to the Crittenden proposals, but there is overwhelming evidence to support the conclusion that any compromise proposal was doomed to failure for the simple reason that the cotton states had no interest whatsoever in patching up their differences with the North but were rather committed to secession.

That Douglas could operate from principle, however, is clearly revealed



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in his record in the election of 1860. Midway in the campaign, he recognized the unlikelihood of his own election and the virtual certainty of a Republican victory. Well aware of the seriousness of the secession threat, something the Republicans blithely ignored, Douglas selflessly entered into a campaign of education to demonstrate to the people of the North that they were flirting with national disaster and to those of the South that peaceable secession was a delusion. This was indeed Douglas' finest hour despite the fact that it was an essay in futility.

Douglas' death at the age of forty-eight, just at the opening of the Civil War, constituted a serious loss to the nation for it left the northern Democrats without a recognized leader. Had Douglas lived, he unquestionably would have given the Democracy the kind of national outlook which it largely lacked during the war years and after. A strong opposition party which gave its undiluted support to the war effort could have helped the Lincoln administration tremendously. In this light, one can better appreciate the importance of Douglas in the history of the nation during this crucial period.

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CORRESPONDENCE

(Continued from page 307)

be better spent by investing $5 in Miss Day's writings (some of which are available in quite inexpensive paperbacks) and sending the other half to the movement. I still feel that way, because reading Miss Day is better than reading about her and there's no chance that author's royalty on a $10 book is going to amount to the direct $5 contribution I proposed. Mr. Erikson is a good photographer. But do we need pictures of Manhattan's Lower East Side to see the humanity the Catholic Worker seeks to serve? The human dimensions of poverty and loneliness are everywhere, even Brooklyn.

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Michael Novak (Cont.)

abandonment of ethnic identity is not neutral; it is a denial of the truth, and is damaging to others as well as to the self.

Daniel Berrigan is not universal. He is, as Rabbi Hertzberg gently points out, "an Irish Catholic priest in a . . . very conservative, largely ethnic church." Berrigan has not escaped his own parochialism. By pretending to be universal, he has lost a sense of finitude; he has lost humility of judgment.

Berrigan calls himself a "Western Christian." But that is already much too grand. He is an Irish-American Catholic Jesuit, and his concrete metaphors for power and authority, for war and peace, for personal liberty and social responsibility, are rooted through and through in that altogether fruitful but also finite bit of this planet's historical geography. His symbolic world is not that of Rabbi Hertzberg, or Saul Bellow, or Irving Kristol, or Leonard Bernstein. Can he not imagine a symbolic universe different from his own and no less moral?

The fascination of the Catholic left with authority, with huge sun-blocking bureaucratic forces, with evils in administrative structure, with signs of doom, is all-too-Catholic, all-too-clerical. Cardinal Ottaviani himself could not have imagined for the modern world a fate so dizzying and doom-laden as our so-called left. And to find the left mesmerized by armaments, by espionage, by prisons, by spies, by power elites, by industrial complexes, by millionaires (as if the world had begun only yesterday), and making no distinctions whatsoever between regimes, cultures, histories, and concrete situations, is to feel again what one felt a dozen years ago in curial circles in Rome: an iron-tight, complacent, impenetrable, simple "truth."

Is the final destination of the left, after so many romantic but attractive moments, anti-Semitism? The thought is disturbing to the depths. Memories of Father Feeney and Father Coughlin are not yet cold. Will the record of American priests who become active in politics once more end in fanaticism, under the guise of "prophecy"?

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